

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 DPW-01 OMB-01 IO-12 EUR-25

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 /141 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0372

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6705

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PINT PINS VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 18, 1973

FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO APRIL 18, 1973
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0204

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, MOPS, CA, CB, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 18, 1973

1. SUMMARY: MR IV WAS RELATIVELY QUIET APRIL 17 WITH 45 INCIDENTS REPORTED. ICCS VINH LONG SUBMITS TWO UNANIMOUS REPORTS AND ICCS TEAMS MAY BEGIN TO USE HELICOPTERS AGAIN FOR INVESTIGATIONS. TWO NEW COMMUNIST REGIMENTS ARE TAKING SHAPE IN AN XUYEN AND KIEN GIANG PROVINCES. RESTRICTIONS ON AIR AND ARTILLERY SUPPORT MAY BE CAUSING DECLINING MORALE AND AGGRESSIVENESS IN TERRITORIAL FORCES.
END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: MR IV WAS RELATIVELY QUIET APRIL 17. THE 45 REPORTED INCIDENTS, THOUGH SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THE APRIL 16 FIGURE, WERE ABOUT AVERAGE FOR THE POST- CEASEFIRE PERIOD. AGAIN, MOST OF THE ACTION WAS CONCENTRATED IN CHUONG THIEN AND
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KIEN PHUONG. AMONG THE INCIDENTS WERE SEVEN GROUND ATTACKS, WITH LOW CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES, 26 ATTACKS BY FIRE, 10 HARRASSMENTS BY FIRE, AND 2 KIDNAPPINGS IN KIEN HOA. RVNAF REPORTED THEY SUFFERED NINE DEAD AND 89 WOUNDED DURING THE DAY , A DECLINE FROM RECENT AVERAGES.

3. ICCS: (A). A CANADIAN ATTACHED TO THE ICCS KHANH HUNG TEAM REPORTS THAT MEMBERS OF THE ICCS MAY USE THEIR HELICOPTERS TO MAKE INVESTIGATIONS. HOWEVER, EACH FLIGHT MUST RECEIVE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE ICCS SAIGON MILITARY COMMITTEE. THE PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GIVEN IF SPECIFIC INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM WHATEVER SOURCES, CONCERNING THE SECURITY CONDITIONS IN THE AREAS TO BE VISITED AND OR FLOWN OVER. A DETAILED FLIGHT PLAN AND FULL INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENT UNDER INVESTIGATION WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED BY THE COMMITTEE PRIOR TO ITS MAKING A DECISION. THESE MEASURES ARE DESIGNED TO PREVENT ANY MORE AIRCRAFT INCIDENTS SUCH AS OCCURRED IN QUANG TRI RECENTLY, RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF SEVERAL ICCS PERSONS. THE EFFECT OF THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL PROBABLY BE TO ALLOW ONLY A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF SATISFYING ALL MILITARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' INQUIRIES ABOUT SECURITY.

(B). ICCS VINH LONG COMPLETED AND FORWARDED REPORTS, BOTH UNANIMOUS, ON ITS FIRST TWO INVESTIGATIONS IN VINH LONG AND SADEC. UNANIMITY WAS DUE TO VERY STRONG CANADIAN PRESSURE SUPPORTED BY THE INDONESIANS. THE POLES SIGNED ONE REPORT, THE FIRST, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD NOT TAKEN PART IN THE ACTUAL INVESTIGATION. INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE REPORTS ARE UNANIMOUS BECAUSE THEY STATE ONLY WHAT HAPPENED, NOT WHO CAUSED THE INCIDENT. IN THE CASE OF THE VINH LONG TRA ON DISTRICT INCIDENT THERE IS A STRONG IMPLICATION THE VC ARE RESPONSIBLE. THE TEAM'S REPORT ON ITS THIRD INVESTIGATION, THE PARTIAL DESTRUCTION APRIL 12 OF A BRIDGE ON QL-4, IS STILL INCOMPLETE. THE TEAM WANTS TO TALK TO THE TWO SOLDIERS GUARDING THE BRIDGE WHEN IT WAS DESTROYED. THE GVN CLAIMS BOTH SOLDIERS WERE WOUNDED IN THE VC ATTACK ON THE BRIDGE AND ARE IN A HOSPITAL IN CAN THO UNAVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONING. THE GVN'S EXCUSES FOR REFUSING TO ALLOW THE ICCS TO QUESTION THE SOLDIERS SOUND " FISHY" EVEN TO OUR VICE CONSUL.

4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY: (A). THE VICE CONSUL IN AN XUYEN REPORTS THAT, ACCORDING TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TWO NEW COMMUNIST REGIMENTS ARE TAKING SHAPE IN AN XUYEN AND KIEN GIANG PROVINCES. A NEW BATTALION TO BE CALLED U MINH 5, SAYS AN XUYEN PROVINCE S-2, IS

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PRESENTLY BEING TRAINED AND WILL JOIN THE EXTANT U MINH 2 AND 3 BATTALIONS TO FORM A NEW REGIMENT. THE KIEN GIANG PROVINCE CHIEF BELIEVES THAT THE NVA 207 B BATTALION OPERATING IN HIS PROVINCE IS ACTUALLY THE Z-4 BATTALION OF THE 18 B REGIMENT. HE OPINES THAT THIS BATTALION WILL JOIN WITH THE U MINH 10 AND ANOTHER BATTALION, WHOSE IDENTITY IS NOT YET KNOWN, TO FORM A NEW REGIMENT IN KIEN GIANG.

(B) VC INITIATED INCIDENTS IN KIEN HOA, CONTINUE TO OCCUR AT THE SAME LOW LEVER- FOR KIEN HOA- AS THEY HAVE SINCE THE CEASEFIRE BEGAN. OF 33 INCIDENTS APRIL 9-13, 14 WERE SMALL UNIT CONTACTS, INDICATING GVN DEFENSIVE PATROLLING, AND NINE WERE BOOBYTRAPS. GVN TROOPS HAVE DISCOVERED SEVERAL LARGE VC WEAPONS CACHES IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS CONTAINING AMMUNITION FOR WEAPONS UP TO 120 MM MORTAR IN SIZE

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